

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended and claim 2 is canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter disclosed therein. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully appreciate the indication that claims 7-9 contain allowable subject matter.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-6, 10-17 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Kenji (JP 11-105039); and claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Kenji in view of Otake (U.S. Patent No. 5,945,059). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

As agreed during the personal interview, none of the applied references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a coated mold insert that includes a removable mold insert, and an electroless nickel layer formed over at least one surface of the removable mold insert, and a layer of chromium nitride formed over the electroless nickel layer, as recited in independent claim 1. Thus, independent claim 1, and its dependent claims, are patentable over the applied references. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-19 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: March 31, 2006

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